DAWN OF DC

POISON IVY™

16

WILSON
TAKARA
PRIANTO

BETTER OFF DEAD!

13+
TEEN

BATWOMAN AND LUKE FOX UNCOVER THE DEEPEST, DARKEST SECRETS OF THE MULTIVERSE!

OUTSIDERS

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AND COLLIN KELLY

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ROBERT CAREY

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DC

A NEW
ONGOING SERIES

NOVEMBER

CJW

This is Chuck.

I don't **remember** him.

In fact, I'm pretty sure his name isn't **actually** Chuck. That's just what I'm calling him in my **head.**

Chuck. Just an **ordinary guy.**

KAFF

KAFF

He was in one of a **dozen towns** I passed through on my way to **Seattle.**

Where **were** we when I **infected** him with **lamia spores?**

Some coffee shop? A **supermarket?** A bar?

It was the most **significant** moment of his **life,** and I don't even know his **real name.**

We just... passed each other like **minivans** in the **night.**

I continued **west.**

AFTER YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT, YOU DON'T WANT IT--

Chuck went home to his **family.**

I try to **imagine** what he **felt** that night.

IF I GAVE YOU THE **MOON**, YOU'D GROW TIRED OF IT SOON--

Maybe a little **tickle** in his **throat.**

And maybe an **itch.**

A weird little **rash.**

Allergy season, you know?

SKRITCH SKRITCH

I DON'T **FEEL** SO GREAT.

THINK I'M GONNA TURN IN **EARLY.**

'Kay.

Now, as **Woodrue** pointed out, I was **wrong** about the **intended purpose** of the **lamia mushrooms.**

They were **never** meant as a **bioweapon.** They were meant for **bio-surveillance.**

So they're a lot **less contagious** than I originally **thought.**

SKRITCH SKRITCH

I envisioned a **swift,** relatively **painless** pandemic, lasting no more than a few **months.**

What I created **instead** was something **limited** and **slow.**

WHAT IN THE WORLD?!

Slow enough for those who were infected to **watch** themselves **suffer.**

MARLA! COME IN HERE! QUICK!

I didn't **mean** to.

I'm not **heartless.**

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S GOING ON?

S-SOME-THING'S **WRONG** WITH ME!

But you know what they say about the road to **hell.**

The things that **changed** my **mind** about the world didn't come **soon enough** for **Chuck.**

And Chuck **can't** just take a day off **work.** Not for some little **mushrooms.**

Here's the part I'm **fuzzy** on.

KAFF KAFF!

I **know** the **lamia spores** aren't as **contagious** as I **thought.** For the **first** few weeks, I was their **primary vector.**

But at **some** point, they got **loose.**

YOU **OKAY,** MAN? YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD.

I'M **FINE.** JUST SOME **WEIRD BUG.**

The spread was **so slow** that they had time to **mutate** in the **wild.**

And the **wild strain...**

At least **cover** your **coughs...**

...the **wild strain** is something far more **dangerous** than even **I** imagined.

Born in a lab. **Perfected** in the overtaxed **immune systems** of an overworked **nation.**

SKKTCH SKKTCH

Inevitable. **Inescapable.**

Beyond even **my** control.

And poor old **Chuck...**

WHAT... WHAT'S HAPPENING... WHAT AM I ***LOOKING*** AT...

He has a **front-row seat** at his own **funeral.**

Something begins to **call** to him. Something he doesn't **understand.**

IS THIS... IS THIS ***REAL?***

The **spores** in his body are **maturing.**

A **part** of himself he's never **seen** before is **waking up.**

...WILD.

And in his **dying mind,** the **lamia spores...**

...lead him back to their mother.

WHO ARE ***YOU?*** WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

*I will barely remember **any** of this. Which is a **shame.***

MY NAME IS

As we **dreamed**, he told me his **real name.**

But like **so much** in dreams, it was **gone** by the time I woke up.

I DON'T RECOGNIZE YOU AT **ALL.** I WONDER HOW YOU **GOT** HERE?

I...I JUST FOLLOWED THE ***MUSHROOM TREES...***

I should have **listened.** I should have tried harder to **remember.**

In my defense, I was **asleep.**

WELL, YOU'RE **NOT** SUPPOSED TO **BE** HERE. THIS IS **MY DREAM.**

I-I DON'T KNOW WHERE ELSE TO ***GO.***

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A ***YOU*** PROBLEM.

THEN WHAT ABOUT ALL THESE ***OTHER*** PEOPLE?

It should have been a sign. A **warning.**

HUH?

DINER GUY? BAD BOSS?

WHY ARE YOU ALL IN MY ***DREAM?***

Just like the women **infected** with the **wild strain** in **California** were a warning.

WELL... IF YOU'RE GOING TO HANG AROUND, AT LEAST STAY OUT OF MY WAY.

In California, I discovered that the **mycelial network** connected me to people **infected** by the **lamia.**

But those were **living** people. In the **early** stages of **infection.**

Of course, **fungi** hover somewhere **between** the living...

...and the **dead.**

The **thing** that's been calling to **Chuck** has **also** been calling to **me.**

I've been **resisting** it. Using my ability to **heal myself** to keep it at **bay.**

IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL...

But the **call** is **still** there.

WHAT IS *THAT?*

THE ORIGINAL **COLONY**... THE MIND OF THE ***WILD STRAIN***...

...WE'RE NOT DREAMING OF ***IT***. IT'S DREAMING OF US...

YOU ***HAVEN'T*** FIGURED IT OUT YET, HAVE YOU?

YOUR ***DREAMS*** HAVE BEEN ***TELLING*** YOU THINGS FOR ***MONTHS.***

YOUR ***UNCONSCIOUS*** MIND ***REALIZES*** WHAT YOUR ***WAKING*** MIND DOES ***NOT.***

UNDINE? YOU'RE HERE TOO?

YOU REMAIN **CONNECTED** TO ***EVERYONE*** INFECTED WITH THE *LAMIA*-- EVEN THE ***WILD STRAIN.***

THE ***MYCELIAL NETWORK*** ACTS LIKE THE ***SYNAPSES*** OF A ***SINGLE MIND.***

HOW MANY OF THE PEOPLE YOU ***INFECTED*** ARE STILL ***TETHERED*** TO YOUR ***THOUGHTS?***

IT DOESN'T *MATTER.* THEY'RE ALL *DEAD.*

GWENDOLYN CALTROPE WASN'T DEAD. *JANET'S FRIEND* FROM *RECEPTION* WASN'T DEAD.

OKAY, THERE'VE BEEN A FEW *ABNORMALITIES.* I WOULD HAVE SEEN *MORE* IF THIS WAS A *WIDESPREAD* PROBLEM.

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF *MIND,* RIGHT?

Don't be *naive.*

THEY ARE COMING FOR YOU, *QUEEN OF REBIRTH.*

THEY ARE *ALL* COMING *HOME* TO THEIR *MOTHER.*

I DON'T HAVE TO *LISTEN* TO YOU. *YOU'RE* DEAD, TOO.

AM I? THAT'S *NEWS* TO *ME.*

TO HAVE SUCH *POWER* AND *WASTE IT.*

I HAVE TO *WONDER* HOW THE *LAMIA* IS *AFFECTING* YOU. YOUR *BRAIN.* WEAKENING YOUR *SENSES.*

IT'S NOT *NATURAL* TO LIVE SO LONG *DELIBERATELY INFECTED* WITH A *PARASITIC FUNGUS.*

I-I'M FINE.

EVER SINCE SEATTLE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO CONTROL IT. IT DOESN'T MAKE ME SICK ANYMORE.

If you say so.

BY THE WAY, ONE OF YOUR LITTLE CRONIES IS ESCAPING.

CHUCK! LOOK OUT!

CHUCK!

?!

WHAT IS IT, HONEY? YOU'RE SOAKED WITH **SWEAT!**

I JUST HAD THE **STRANGEST** DREAM...

*Does Chuck try to **save** himself?*

YOU'VE **GOT** TO SEE THE **DOCTOR.** YOU CAN'T GO **ON** LIKE THIS.

*Or does he try to just **power through** it?*

I'LL GO NEXT WEEK. I **CAN'T** MISS WORK TODAY.

*Suck it up, go to **work.** Like we **all** do.*

*We never think, this is it, this is the **last moment** before the **meteor** hits and my life is **over.***

*Probably because it's **absurd** to think about **dying** on your way to catch the **bus** or something.*

HNNNG!

We **also** fail to consider that there are **plenty** of fates **worse** than death.

One of which came for **Chuck.**

It's **depressing** to realize how long a person can be **stranded** without **help.**

Even someone with a **job** and a **family**-- like **Chuck.**

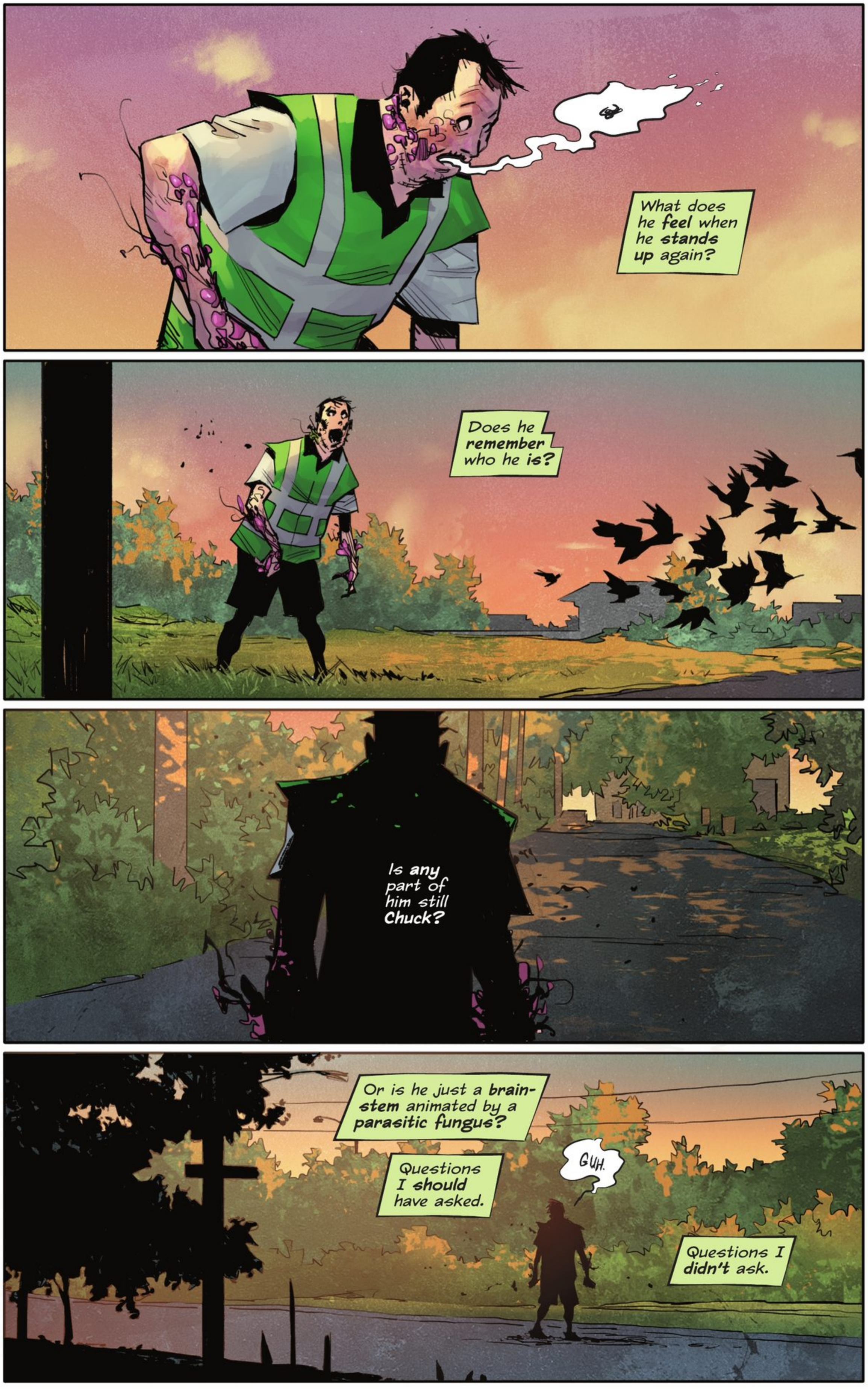
I wonder how long he had to **lie** there, **alone.**

I wonder how many people walked **past** him and did **nothing.** Thought he was **drunk** or **dangerous.**

Does Chuck **die** before he is **reborn?**

Is there a moment **between** Chuck the **person** and Chuck the **lamia colony?**

I leave that question to the **philosophers.**


What does he feel when he stands up again?
Does he remember who he is?
Is any part of him still Chuck?
Or is he just a brain-stem animated by a parasitic fungus?
Questions I should have asked.
GUH.
Questions I didn't ask.

But I bet his **family** asked **plenty** of questions.

HI-- **SANDY?** IS **CHUCK** STILL THERE?

HE'S USUALLY HOME BY SIX, AND IT'S ALMOST **SEVEN-THIRTY...**

YOU MEAN HE'S NOT HOME **SICK?**

I **ASSUMED** HE WAS OUT WITH A **COLD** OR SOMETHING-- HE HAD THAT **COUGH--**

NO, HE'S NOT HERE!

HE LEFT FOR WORK THIS MORNING AS **USUAL--** I **TRIED** TO GET HIM TO SEE A DOCTOR, BUT--

I'M REALLY **SORRY,** MARLA. HE **NEVER** CAME IN TODAY.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO **DO--** He's not answering his **phone--**

When someone **dies** unexpectedly, the tragedy doesn't **stop** with **them.**

It ripples outward.

WE'VE CHECKED THE ROUTE TO HIS **BUS STOP**, QUESTIONED HIS **COWORKERS**--

HIS **CELL PHONE** PINGED FROM THE **WOODS** JUST WEST OF HERE BEFORE IT WENT **DEAD.**

The **woods?**

MA'AM-- HAS YOUR HUSBAND BEEN **DEPRESSED** LATELY? ANY REASON TO BELIEVE HE MIGHT BE SUFFERING **PSYCHIATRIC PROBLEMS?**

DEPRESSED? I--

--I DON'T KNOW, HE **WORKS** TOO HARD, JUST LIKE **EVERYBODY** DOES THESE DAYS--

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO **DO**-- I HAVE TO GET THE **KIDS** TO SCHOOL AND GO TO **WORK**--

WE'VE GOT A **BULLETIN** OUT-- IF ANYBODY **SPOTS** HIM, WE'LL LET YOU **KNOW.**

There is never only **one** victim of a **murder.**

HE'LL TURN UP, BABE. HE'S GOT TO.

I DON'T KNOW.

IT'S A GOOD SIGN THAT THEY HAVEN'T FOUND HIM. IF HE FELL OR HAD A HEART ATTACK OR SOMETHING, THEN--

DON'T TALK ABOUT FALLS AND HEART ATTACKS.

I JUST MEANT THEY HAVEN'T FOUND A BODY, SO HE'S PROBABLY STILL ALIVE!

Geez, Paula.

There's no preparation for this kind of thing.

For the days that divide your life into before and after.

They seem to come out of **nowhere.**

Though they almost always come out of **somewhere.**

Something you weren't **paying attention** to.

Something you didn't think was **important.**

That's why these things always feel so **unfair.**

There's no **warning** when the **meteor** hits your life.

Nobody knows the **hour.**

You're caught totally **off guard.**

But that **meteor** has been traveling **toward** you at **top speed** for weeks, months, **years.**

Hnngh!

You just haven't seen it **coming.**

And now it's **too late** to **stop** it.

DC COMICS PRESENTS:

POISON IVY

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NEXT:
MUCK AROUND, FIND OUT.

WALTER BROUGHT HIS FRIENDS TOGETHER
AND ASKED A SIMPLE QUESTION:

"HOW DO YOU THINK THE WORLD WILL END?"

NO ONE WAS READY FOR HIS ANSWER.

THE NICE HOUSE ON THE LAKE

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IN YEARS AND MAYBE EVEN EVER." —AIPT

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James Tynion IV

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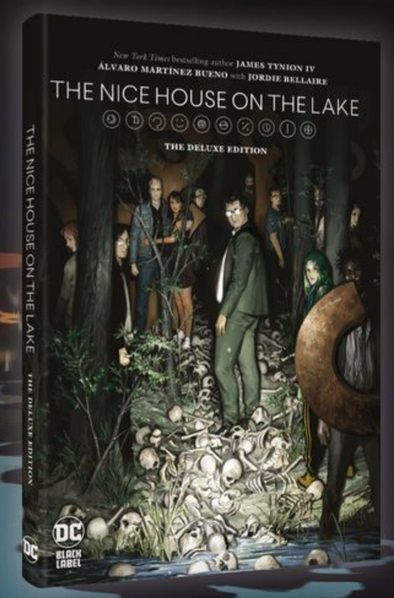
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THE NICE HOUSE ON THE LAKE
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ON SALE NOW!

DC NATION SPOTLIGHT ON

BATMAN OFF-WORLD

INTERVIEW WITH JASON AARON

The blockbuster creative team of writer Jason Aaron and artist Doug Mahnke unite for *Batman: Off-World*, a seven-issue epic sending Batman toward the stars. DC Nation sat down with Aaron to help uncover the burning secrets behind this series.

Batman has historically been a very grounded character, and this story sends him into deep space. What was it like taking the Dark Knight so out of his element?

Taking Batman out of his element is one of the most fun parts of this story. This is a young Batman and he's only just started to get a handle on his mission in Gotham. Then something otherworldly happens that shows Bruce how little he really knows about the universe as a whole. Now he's taking on a challenge unlike anything he's faced before.

As this story begins we find Batman aboard a spacecraft called the *War Storm*. What is this ship and who are some of the characters already on it?

The *War Storm* is a massive spaceship that acts as a mercenary training school. It goes from world to world, abducting aliens and forcing them to train as hired soldiers. Once Batman finds himself there, he meets up with Ione of Tamaran, who's a fiery stormchaser, which is like a bounty hunter in this particular sector of space, the Slag Galaxy.

What has it been like collaborating with legendary artist Doug Mahnke?

It's a total dream come true. For years now, Doug has been at the top of my "Have to Work With" list for artists. He's been absolutely nailing it on this project from page one. No surprise, but Doug draws the best-looking horde of alien killers you could ever imagine.

You've penned so many iconic runs on different superheroes—what are you specifically bringing to Batman that readers haven't seen before?

I love writing a young Batman thrown into a corner of the DCU that's wholly new to him. As a reader, it was really DC that first made me a comics fan as a kid. This project is very much an ode to some of those DC series that hooked me, like *The New Teen Titans*, *Atari Force*, and *The Dark Knight Returns*.

After many years of writing comics at other publishers, what has it been like to return to DC?

It feels great. It's a return in that Vertigo gave me one of my first big breaks in comics several years ago. But to me this *really* feels like my DC debut. You better believe that *Batman: Off-World* is just the first of many new DC projects that I'm excited to bring to life.

DON'T MISS *BATMAN: OFF-WORLD* #1, ON SALE IN NOVEMBER!

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SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"